



## Naperville Getting Smart for 2010

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Naperville, Illinois, a half hour west of Chicago, plans to deploy 57,000 smart meters over the next three years. The project is being done on a volunteer basis. In October Naperville, which runs its own utility, was the only plans to install 57,000 smart meters over the next three years in the homes of customers who volunteer.

In October, the city was the only Illinois city granted a smart-grid grant from the United States Department of Energy. In early December the Naperville City Council voted to match the DOE's \$11 grant through bond sales. City officials estimate that once consumers use the information provided by the smart to better regulate their power usage they could potentially save up to 15 percent of their current bill.

Energy watchdog groups are taking a more cautious approach. "We think a well-designed smart grid can be good for consumers," agrees David Kolata, Citizens Utility Board director, "but there are some policy questions to work through."

Chief among them is billing, sparked in large part by the complaints filed against Pacific Gas & Electric by a hundred or so angry customers in Fresno, Calif., who claim smart meters overbilled them. So far, none of the meters have been found to be defective.

Other utilities in the Chicago area are also installing smart meters, including ComEd which has rolled out 130,000 smart meters, adding to the estimated 8 million currently installed. Research by Park Associates indicates more than 33 smart meters will be deployed in the United States by 2011.

Naperville is still in the process of establishing a rate per hour pricing plan for energy but public utilities director, Alan Poole, expressed confidence the city will not have to raise electricity rates to pay off the debt incurred by the rollout. The only cost to the volunteer group is \$100 for the home-area display unit. Poole says even there the city may develop a cost-sharing program. Conversely, ComEd has announced a \$5 increase for customers with smart meters beginning in the New Year to pay for the utility's \$69 million program.

Consumer advocates have expressed concern over the amount of data collected by smart meters and who will have access. Leslie Harris, CEO of the Center for Democracy and Technology, says consumers should be wary of anyone from marketers to law enforcement amassing personal information gleaned from energy use patterns.

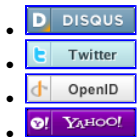
"For[utilities]to say 'Trust us; we're not going to share data in identifiable form' is really not good enough," Harris says. "They have to have some mindfulness that they are now in the personal-data collection business."

Naperville officials have assured customers no individual data will be released to third parties and law enforcement would require a court orders. Mark Curran, Naperville's assistant director of public utilities adds, "Privacy of data is going to be a very important piece we'll have to work out to make sure we're following the law without giving out people's private information."



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